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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Department of Agriculture to host public meetings on grazing permits

WINDOW ROCK-The Navajo Nation Department of Agriculture will host public meetings from July 12-14, at the Fire Rock Casino in Church Rock, N.M., starting at 8:30 a.m. each day.

The meetings are in response to the Navajo Nation Council's Resources and Development Committee's (RDC) directive to find a solution to the nation's feral livestock problem and deteriorating land conditions.

RDC Chairwoman Katherine Benally, said, "We have to inform Navajo citizens about the condition of the land, receive public input and present a plan uniting Navajo resources as a solution."

On July 12, the RDC will hear reports from the Bureau of Natural Resources, Bureau of Indian Affairs, U.S. Geological Society, Navajo Environmental Protection Agency, Natural Resources Conservation Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture and Navajo Resources Enforcement.

The following day is slated for feedback from the general public and a presentation from the Navajo Nation Water Resources Department.

The idea is to hear from chapter members on how they want their communities transformed. Working together toward that common goal is the plan for tribal officials.

The final day will afford the NNDA and its partners to present their solutions and alternatives to the grazing issues facing the Navajo Nation.

"The meeting has to be solution oriented," said Leonard Tsosie, council delegate and member of the RDC. "We are looking at the protection of the homeland."

Range inventory and utilization studies compiled by the BIA will be available to the public, including conservation projects in progress.

"We are dealing with continuous drought, feral and domestic livestock overpopulation, depleted forage and limited funds," said Leo Watchman, NNDA manager. "But we are solution-oriented and the Navajo Grazing Act will be presented as part of the solution."

The BIA is focused on educating the Navajo public on supporting the process and needs grazing permit holders to make a change. Several departments under the Navajo Nation Division of Natural Resources will be participating.

The NNDA extends invitations to District Grazing Committee Members, Navajo Farm Board, Eastern Navajo Land Board, grazing permit holders and the general public.

For more information, contact NNDA at 928-871-6605.